

Landscape, Culture, and Identity : Redefining the Borderlands

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B.A. Architecture
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Submitted to the Department of Architecture in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, June 2004.

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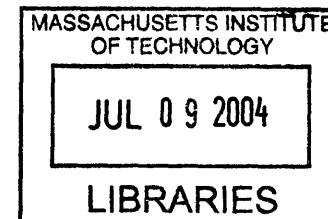
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Abstract

The proposal seeks to develop and foster new understandings of this border through using built form as a vehicle for re-orienting, disorienting our physical and psychological understandings of borders. The physical intervention creates a release from the current condition which the fence embodies, that of separation, and contradiction. Through transgressing the fence physically and programmatically, one is temporarily freed of this tension, thereby accessing the fence through a different perspective. The resulting transgression is a new territory, perhaps a hybrid of the two. The building choreographs one's movement across the changes in the landscape, thereby revealing of the multiple readings of the fence. At points the boundary seemingly disappears, where at other times one is confronted with the wall as an artifact, a ruin that dominates the landscape. A point of passage is created through excavating underneath the fence; an artificial landscape is carved away in reference to the existing valleys, which already cut across the border. The fence becomes suspended, revealing the irony and frailty of its construction both literally and symbolically. Performance as program creates a venue for the transgression, which takes place. It is an instrument to allow for a alternate dialogue between the two countries.

"The border wall has no architectural program, yet it generates intense activity. Crudely built, it is loaded with complex symbolism, more construct than construction...[and] reveals the power of an abstraction to create human environments." -Teddy Cruz

Thesis Supervisor: Shun Kanda
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"Each surface is an interface between two environments that are ruled by a constant activity in the form of an exchange between the two substances placed in contact with one another."

-Paul Virilio



from Virilio, Paul. *The Lost Dimension*. Semiotexte(e). New York: 1991. p. 17.

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Overview



Objectives

The proposal seeks to develop and foster new understandings of “borders” through using built form as a vehicle for re-orienting, disorienting our physical and psychological understandings of borders. Spatially the architecture seeks to disrupt the one-sided dialogue, which currently exists. Currently the wall that physically divides (and symbolically) is mute, it is a datum, which cuts across the landscape. As in Valeska Soares’ installation, the wall acts like a mirror, reflecting desires, frustrations, hopes, and disappointments. Tenuously yet determined, it demarcates territory, territory that ironically belongs to neither side. The people whom it has divided remain nationless, they are hybrids and outcasts. The border as a region is one of continual metamorphosis; it changes identity, just like its inhabitants, in order to survive.

“The border wall has no architectural program, yet it generates intense activity. Crudely built, it is loaded with complex symbolism, more construct than construction. The wall reveals the power of an abstraction to create human environments.”

My proposal seeks to “legitimize” this hybrid existence through engaging and transgressing the wall to creating overlaps of territory while simultaneously creating new territory. The building becomes a vehicle for re-understanding the wall. By choreographing the visitor’s movement across the site, through elevation change, framing views, changes in scale between building and visitor, the visitor becomes increasingly aware of the multiplicitous effects of the fence. At points it seemingly disappears, as the building bridges a small valley, where the fence is swallowed by the magnitude of the terrain spanning both countries. Other times one is directly confronted with the wall as an artifact, a ruin that dominates the landscape. The point of passage from one country to another reveals a bird’s eye view, one is elevated above the wall, and a spatial hierarchy is set up. Here one glimpses the artificiality of the wall, and its arbitrary yet steadfast journey from land to sea. At this point reality seems temporally suspended, the visitor is caught between two territories yet existing in neither.

The notion of performance as the “program” is intended to engage the two sides in an alternate dialogue. Dance, music, theater are forms of expression understood through the senses, a very direct, sensual form of communication which affords individual interpretations, filtered by personal experience, history, culture. Daily activities or performances are then juxtaposed, or interwoven with formal ones. Performances may exist side by side, on top of each other. The surfaces which separate or unit them become another means of exploring boundaries.

“And just as the boundaries of new settlements. And just as the transition from soil to structure creates simultaneous natural and constructed borders (the augurer’s lines or first-degree borders), so the interior creates various functional zones...that both merge into and bound one another, obscuring many points of transition while delineating others.”

(Pg. 8). (Architecture of Enric Miralles and Carme Pinos)

The relationship between performer and viewer thus also becomes confused. No longer is the traditional hierarchy of performer to audience upheld. In some instances the audience becomes part of the performance and visa versa. Everyday activities are framed as performances; the participants are thus performers but also can become audiences in formal concerts. Constantly this relationship is woven in and out of the building, as well as across the border itself. The changing roles between audience and performer reflect the flexibility, which is necessary in understanding this highly charged yet “liminal” space existing along the border.

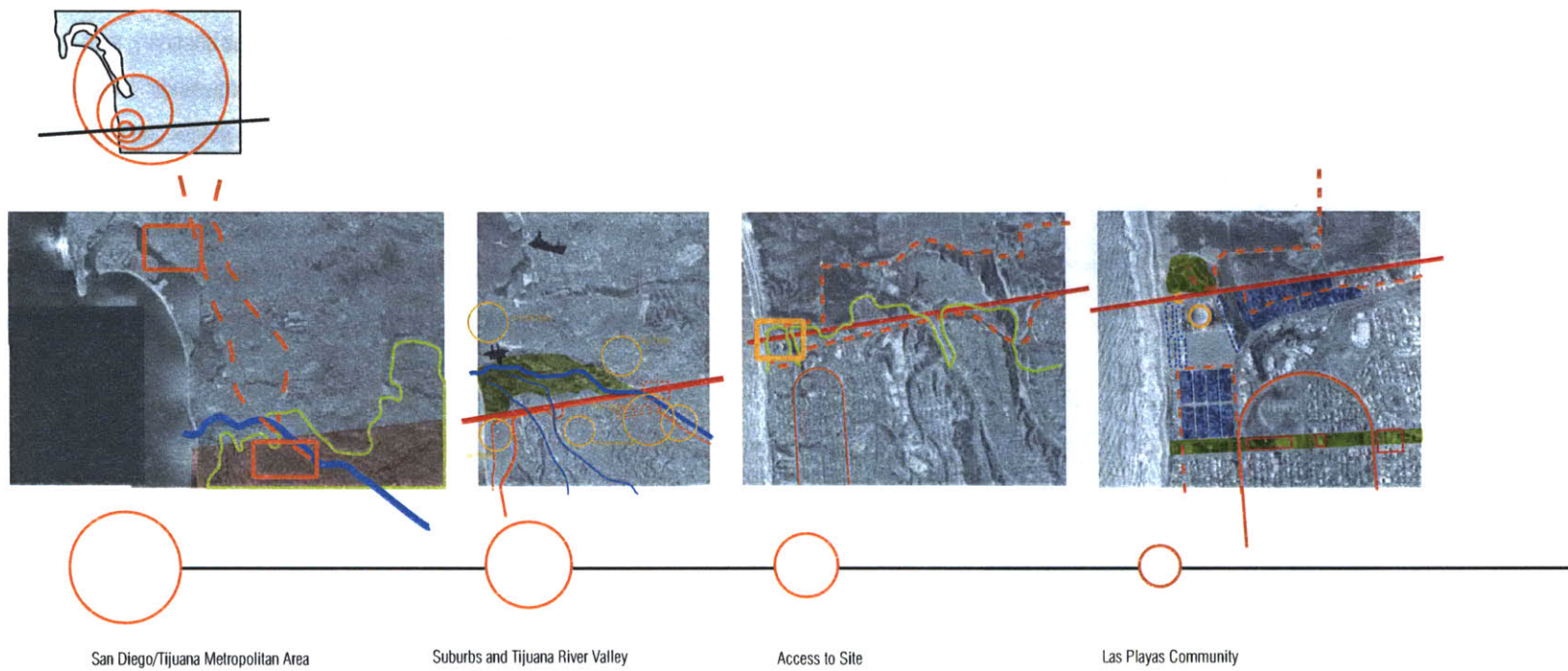
Introduction

Borders have existed for centuries; they are devices used to define an area, a nation. They are used to both unite and separate a group of people. Politically, borders define where one governing system and its laws begins and where another ends. Borders have been used to claim territory, and as a line of defense, to protect what lies within, creating at time areas of conflict, dispute, war, and despair. Politically, the birth of the modern nation-state has enforced the need for borders. Nationalism and its success is dependant upon fixed, defined territorial delineation. Yet, in the last half of the century many borders, as we traditionally understand them have changed. Recently the effects of globalization have begun to dissolve many borders. Byproducts such as “free trade” have opened the gates to commerce, and have initiated the flow of cultural, ideological, and social exchange. Modern communication technologies have allowed us to interface with countries all over the world resulting in Marshall McLuhan’s so-called “global villages”. Our society is transforming, our cities are shifting, and our lives are continually in a state of flux. Most of us have become transients, even nomadic in nature, uprooted from our “origins” we reside in many different cities, countries throughout our lifetime. Therefore, are borders, as we conventionally understand them, therefore becoming obsolete? Or is there an even greater need for them, to help redefine ourselves in such a global society?

The U.S.- Mexican Border: A Brief History



The Mexican American border was created in 1848 at the end of the Mexican American war. The treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo established that the northern territories of Mexico would be ceded to the United States. This acquisition of land was part of American's desire for "Manifest Destiny." Upon this the International Boundary Commission was established to establish the boundary, map and explore the newly acquired territories. Historically these "borderlands" have always been in a state of flux. Their geography between mountain ranges and desert has made them a natural stop over point, a place to gather water and supplies, a crossing point, where trading posts were set up. The people who inhabited these lands were also in constant motion. Many have tried to claim this territory, resulting in wars between numerous indigenous tribes as well the Spaniards and Americans.



Tijuana and San Diego : A Binational Metropolis?

The border reaches approximately 2,000 miles from Brownsville Texas to San Diego California. There are many twin cities that exist along this border, many which without the other would not survive, they have become in some cases become one metropolis, through divided by a border. The cities of Tijuana and San Diego are one of the largest sets of cities, and perhaps one of the most economically and socially different. Their relationship is one of many contradictions and ironies. Ultimately the point at which these two countries meet is the synthesis of these ironies.

Tijuana crashes against the border wall, creating a virtual zero setback zone. Its urban fabric is chaotic, dense and energetic in contrast to San Diego's conservative grid. Though only 20 miles apart, San Diego keeps a safe distance, with type of militarized buffer zone to keep Tijuana's chaos at bay.

San Diego is the 7th largest city in the U.S. with a population of 2.8 million people. A sprawling city, which consumes 4,261 square miles. Tijuana has a population of about 1.5 million, a much denser city on only 1,400 square miles. Tijuana is growing at a rapid rate of 6.2%, more than its current infrastructure can handle, San Diego is increasing at a steady rate of 1.6%.¹ Together these cities form one of the largest binational metropolises in the country. Traditionally Tijuana has always been San Diego's sinful escape. In the beginnings it was a mere trading post, later during the prohibition it boomed into a tourist heaven for liquor, lust and gambling. Tijuana had become the alter ego of San Diego, satisfying the unspeakable, or what could not be satisfied in its own city. Meanwhile, Tijuana's

population was booming, becoming the gateway for those who longed to enter the U.S. coyotes, human trafficking.

Notes

¹ www.sandag.org

The Border Fence

Although the border was established in 1848, the physical wall separating San Diego and Tijuana was not implemented until the early 1990's with the creation of "Operation Gatekeeper."¹ Operation Gatekeeper was launched in 1994 to stem the flow the illegal immigrants to the U.S. The government has spent nearly 1 billion dollars² to increase security in the San Diego area. This has included the erection of a 44-mile fence using old corrugated steel landing mats from the Gulf War. High intensity lighting along this new fence was also installed along with motion detectors, infrared cameras, helicopters, and roughly 2,000 extra border patrol personal to the area.³ This intensification of technology and manpower along the 44 miles of the border between San Diego and Tijuana has resulted in many immigrants moving eastward, to the desert to cross. The treacherous desert environment has caused many deaths. The "problem" of immigration has not been solved, merely moved, and has resulted in greater alienation between the two "friendly" countries. In the Department of Justice's investigation into Operation Gatekeeper the following statement is made about the creation of the fence, "Although not a great impediment to persons wishing to climb over (the panels contain horizontal grooves which provide easy toe and hand grips for climbers) the fencing serves two important functions: it provides a barrier to vehicles crossing the border with aliens and/or drugs, and it defines a clear line of demarcation between the two countries."⁴

Currently the major crossing point occurs in San Ysidro, here more than 40 million people and 15 million vehicle cross annually. It is the largest land

crossing in the world, where over 40,000 people commute to work daily.

During rush hour, one can wait for over 2 hours to cross to the U.S. in a car. Economic policies such as NAFTA have encouraged economic exchange, and as a result have encouraged the flux of populations across the border. On the other hand, however, the U.S. continues to thicken its borders. New triple fence is already being planned to discourage more illegal crossing. Nevins attributes this contradiction to a conflict within the "Modern Territorial State." The U.S. desires to protect its national territory and its citizens, while desiring maximum economic benefits through transnational exchange.



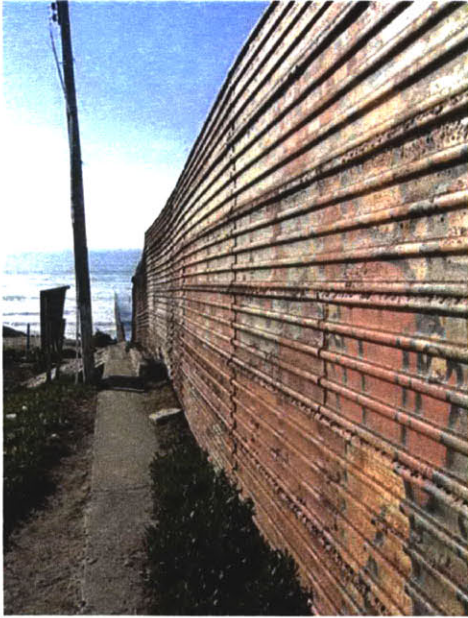
Notes

¹ Nevins, Joseph "Operation Gatekeeper" pg. 10

² Nevins 10

³ Nevins 11

⁴ http://www.fas.org/irp/agency/doj/oig/gatekpr/gkp01.htm#P137_12622 The Department of Justice Report "Operation Gatekeeper: An Investigation Into Allegations of Fraud and Misconduct"



Identity and Territory

Identities and Transgression

This contradiction is a product of our global society, in which economic exchange is heralded but social exchange is difficult. While our society does become more global through communications technologies, our identities and nationalities become challenged. We have traditionally identified ourselves with a certain nationality, ethnicity or culture, globalization has destroyed this notion, now we are able to seemingly take on multiple identities, or at least we must search harder to understand how we understand each other. Territory and identity are intimately linked and define our psyche. Though politically two territories, the area of the border exists socially and psychologically as a “third” territory, one belonging to neither side and whose existence and identity are continually recreated by the people who drift in between.

“There is nothing natural about the border; it’s a highly constructed place that gets reproduced through the crossing of people, because without the crossing there is no border, right? It’s just an imaginary line, a river or it’s just a wall.”

“It is a place that is constituted discursively through the representation of the two nations and materially through the installation of a transnational, corporate space in which different national discourses are both materialized and transcended. It is an ambivalent space at the fringes of two societies, remotely controlled by their core powers.”¹

The border is continually re created by those who cross it, making its construction a very dynamic one. This liminal space is the opportunity to create environments and typologies that could exist nowhere else. Where two edges meet is not simply a line but the beginning of a discourse; it has spatial qualities in which we can explore the notion of boundary to the fullest. Here boundaries can be continually erased and created, layered, collapsed, and transgressed. A suspension of the traditional notion of territory can occur, to perhaps legitimize the transitory identities, which already exist.

“In every man there is the possibility of his being- or, to be more exact, of his becoming once again – another man.” (Paz, 28).

Yet, the exercise is not merely to confuse territory, but to reorient our understanding of identity as related to it. That is this “suspension” might allow for a reconfiguration of identity as related to place. This discourse can only take place when the contradictions and tensions, which uphold the traditional notion of territory, can be released.

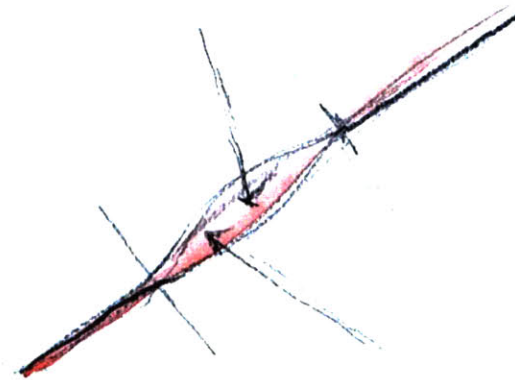
To mutate one dimensionality and 2-sidedness of the wall, by thickening it. Emphasizing the notion of the “border region” an area of transmigration, and mutation of identities. The physical fence is one of contradictions, as is the region itself. It is an acknowledgement of the notion that the site is truly a mutation of two “sides” the people who inhabit this “territory” are in a state of limbo, in that they are ignored by the two sides which they border. They are outcasts in either

worlds, or myths, in which they try to escape into, by transgressing the artificial border wall, which symbolically separates them. In thickening the wall these "outcasts" suddenly have a "territory" which is problematic, in that their presence is acknowledged therefore empowering them and giving them an identity. This may not solve the "problem" that still exists, one of political, economic isolation. Yet it provides a platform for beginning to understand the problem, relating identity and its transgression in a very spatial and hence psychological manner. In the assumption that our understanding of space, and its meaning is inherently a psychological understanding.

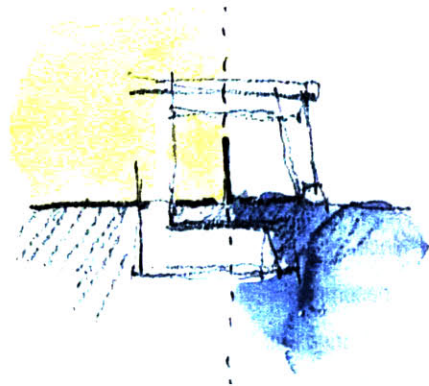
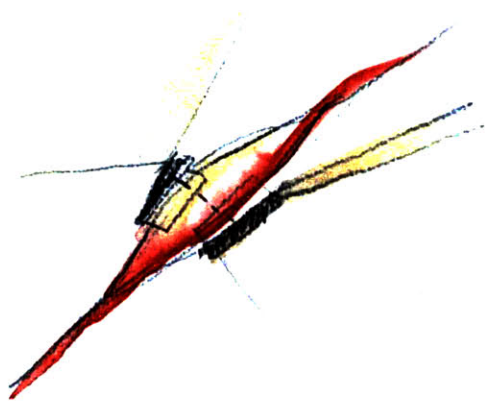
The reality of the fence becomes "heightened" charged and at the same time engagable. The integrity of the function of the fence, to separate, is destroyed, by adding dimension, literally and physically, it becomes a node instead of a line, a point of convergence rather than separation. It brings up the complexities of the problem, which are mute currently. Passage and non-passage, limbo of existing in one "territory" but not being able to engage it completely. Understanding the "myth" from the other side.

Notes

¹ Sadowski-Smith, Claudia. *Globalization on the Line*. p. 100



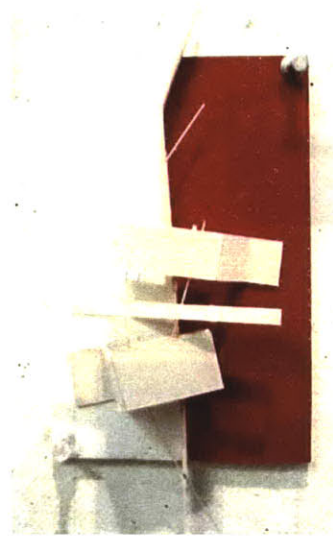
Border Diagrams





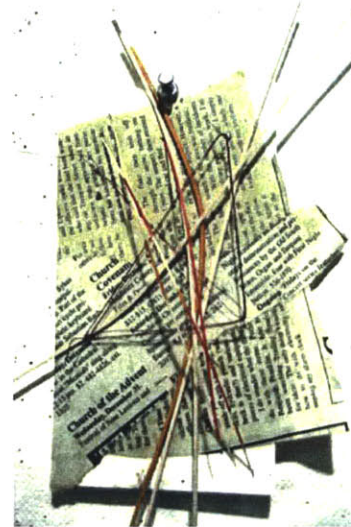
"Borders are dynamic membranes through which interactions and diverse transformations occur."

-James Corner



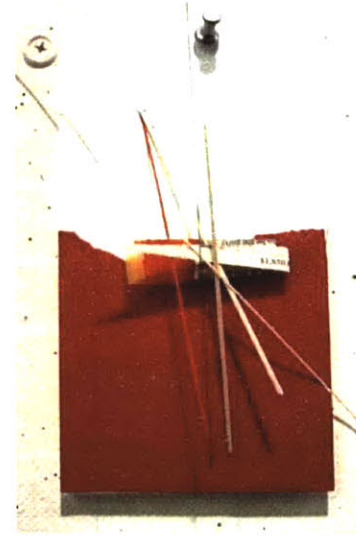
"Each surface is an interface between two environments that are ruled by a constant activity in the form of an exchange between the two substances placed in contact with one another."

-Paul Virilio



"Public space, in an electronic age, is space on the run. Public space is not space in the city, but the city itself. Not nodes but circulation routes: not buildings and plazas but roads and bridges."

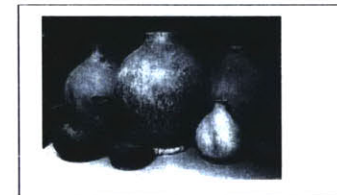
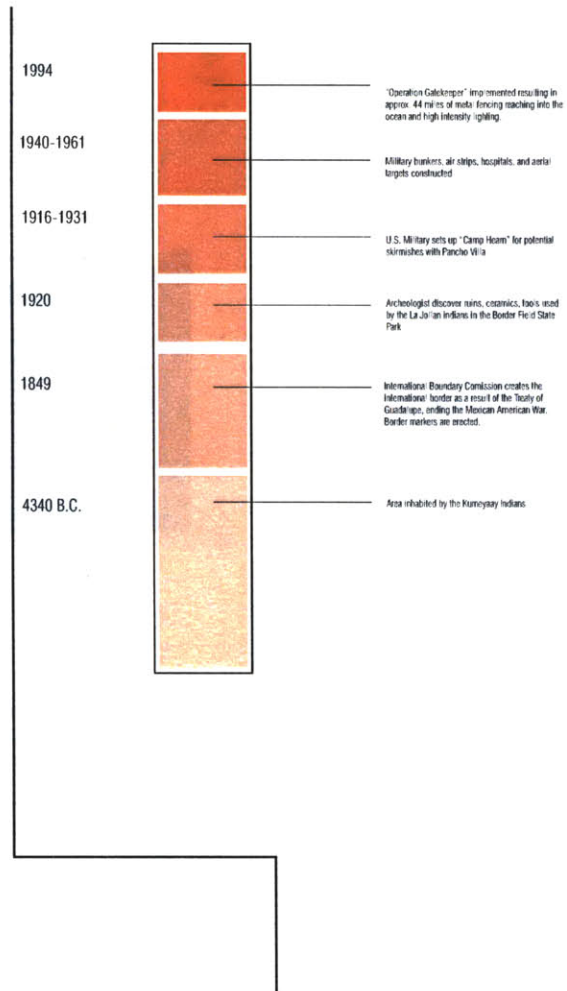
-Vito Acconci



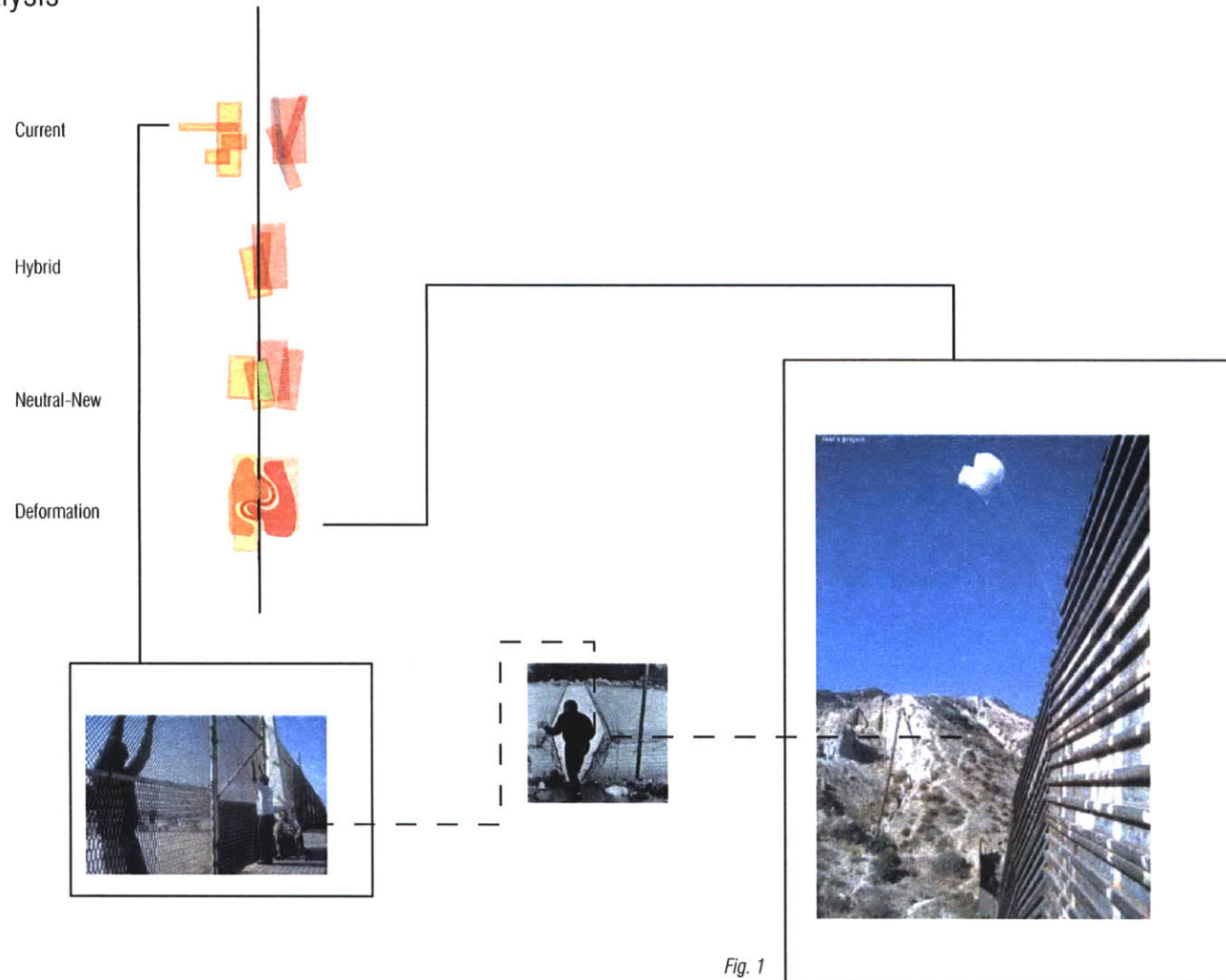
"[Borders are] where difference is respected while potentially productive forces on either side may be brought together into newly created relationships."

-James Corner

Timeline



Border Analysis



Precedence

inSITE installations

inSITE is a collaborative venture of cultural institutions in both Tijuana and San Diego. First started in 1992, inSITE commissions projects from artists on both sides of the border in response to the border condition in San Diego and Tijuana.

The collaboration between two countries to organize this event is impressive. It inspired me to look towards my own intervention of a performance venue as a truly binational event, attracting performers from both U.S. and Mexico.

Many of the installations from the most recent exhibition "Fugitive Sites" engage directly with the border wall. I found myself most fascinated by Alfredo Jaar's project "La Nube." Anchored from both sides of the border a mass of white balloons hovers above the fence. The project is a memorial to those who have died crossing this border. At one moment the balloons are released, free to drift in any direction. The project recognizes the fence as a division, while lifting our thoughts higher, above it, to allow us to erase this boundary, even if just for a moment.



Fig. 2

"La Nube, The Cloud" by Alfredo Jaar

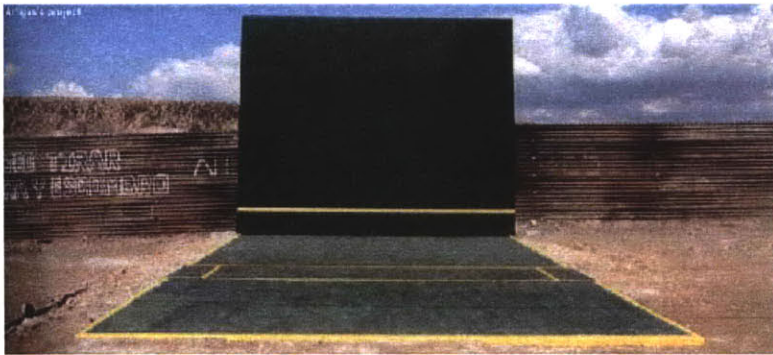


Fig. 3

"The Rules of the Game" by Gustavo Artigas



Fig. 4

"Picturing Paradise" by Valeska Soares

The Site

The Site: The western terminus of the border

The site chosen for this investigation is at the western end of the U.S. – Mexican border, on one side lies the neighborhood of Las Playas a beach neighborhood of Tijuana, on the U.S. side the Border Field State Park.

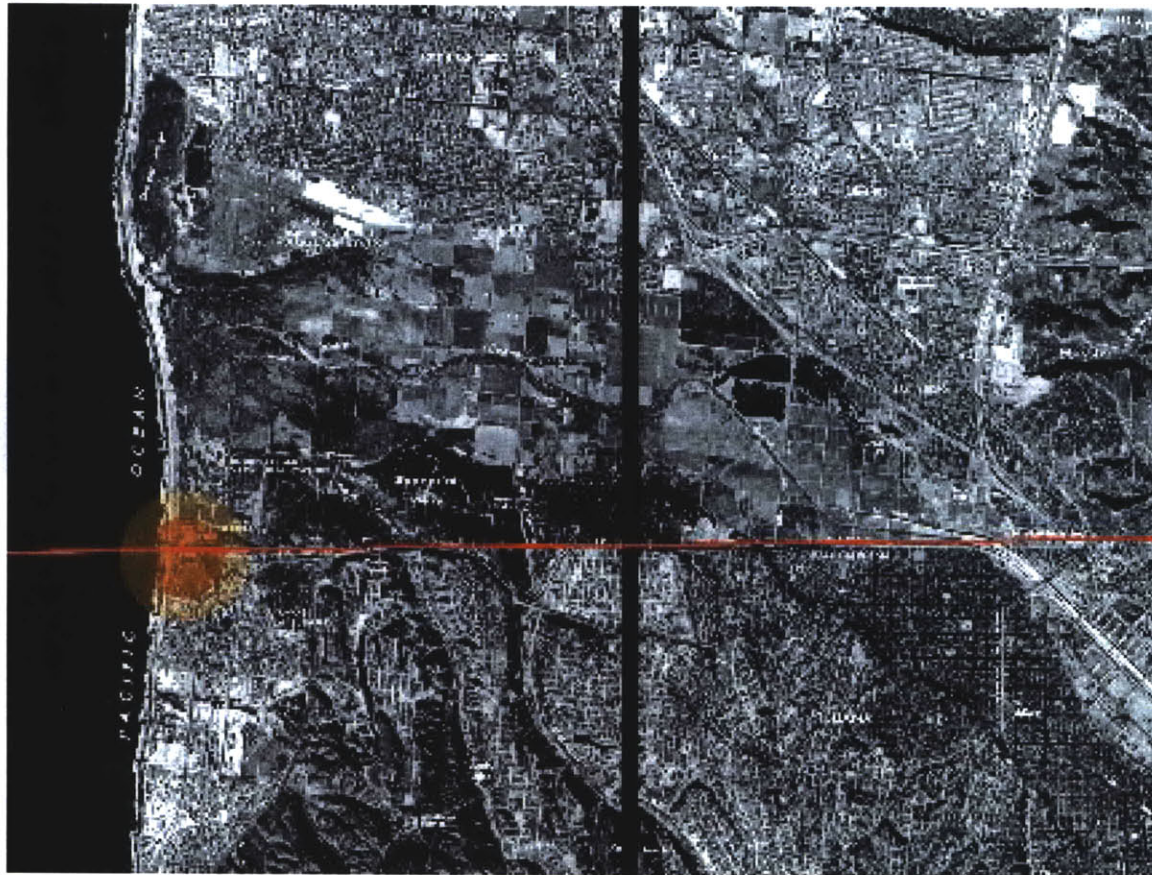
The site is perhaps the most telling of the border condition, because it highlights the perversity of the fence as an element relentlessly cutting a line through the landscape, while simultaneously undermining its integrity and very purpose. Here the landscape makes a series of hills and valleys before it sinks into the Pacific Ocean. The Tijuana River converges and empties into the sea, its watershed split between the two countries. Landscape and ecology are shared and show no evidence of this political border. The fence acts as a datum line, making this relationship even more evident, as is attempts to run up down the canyons and valleys. In elevation it takes on a serpentine form revealing the continuous landscape, unable to stop their transgression across the border. It even reaches into the ocean about 20 yards, but is then defeated by the vastness of the Pacific and stops. Here one begins to understand the irony and reality of a line drawn on a map, can it truly exist? Or must it remain a construction on paper and in policies? Though simple in its conception, it is seemly impossible in three-dimensions. It is a two-dimensional idea, which can only exist on paper.

From the “Exactitude in Science” by Jorge Luis Borges:

“...In that Empire, the craft of Cartography attained such Perfection that the Map of a Single province covered the space of an entire City, and the Map of the Empire itself an entire Province. In the course of Time, these Extensive maps were found somehow wanting, and so the College of Cartographers evolved a Map of the Empire that was of the same Scale as the Empire and that coincided with it point for point. Less attentive to the study of Cartography, succeeding Generations came to judge a map of such Magnitude cumbersome, and, not without Irreverence, they abandoned it to the rigors of Sun and Rain. In the western deserts, tattered Fragments of the Map are still to be found, Sheltering an occasional Beast or Beggar; in the whole Nation, no other relic is left of the Discipline of Geography.”¹

Notes

¹Boddington, Anne. “Editorial,” from *Architectural Design* vol. 69 1999, pg. 5. taken from Jorge Luis Borges, *A Universal History of Infamy*. Penguin Books: 1972. p. 131.



from U.S.G.S. (www.usgs.gov)



Fig. 5

From North to South: Progression along the coast from Imperial Beach to Las Playas



Fig. 6

Border Field State Park

The Border Field State park resides on the northern side of the fence, within the larger Tijuana Estuary, although meant to be a space for recreation; the site is abandoned, and mainly used as an observation point for the Border Patrol. Perched on the top of the hill, it eerily resembles the typical American park, complete with trail maps, signs, a grassy field, barbeque grills, and picnic tables. It is accessed by Monument Road, recently paved it connects the larger area of the Tijuana estuary to Interstate 5, running north-south.

History:

This side of the border has an interesting layering of artifacts and history. Artifacts from around 4,000 B.C. have been uncovered here left by The Kumeyaay Indians, the earliest inhabitants of this site. Ever since the first border marker was placed here in 1848, the site has been used for military purposes. From 1916 to 1931 it was used as a military camp to fend off Pancho Villa. Later during WWII military bunkers, which still remain, as well as airstrips, hospitals, and aerial targets were constructed. Finally in 1994 the current steel fence was erected. This layering of artifacts adds another dimension to the border as a transitory place. There is a sense of abandonment of these objects, they are artifacts, layered upon each other, and some are more lasting than others. If a section could be cut through the earth to reveals the layers one could understand this dimension. Currently all that is visible is the fence, and the belongings for those who have tried to cross it. The landscape offers shelter, like the bunkers, rations, objects are left behind for others to reclaim, find, use.





Border Field State Park



Approach to Border Field State Park via the access road

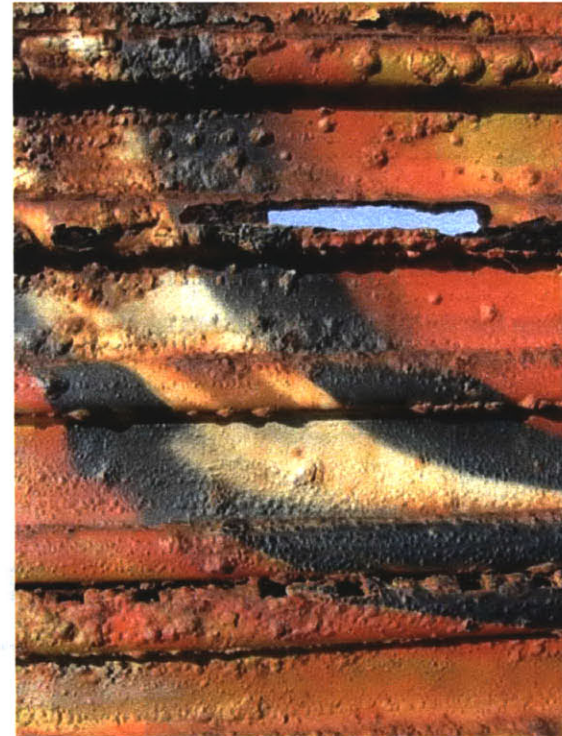
The border fence from the U.S. side as it negotiates the hills and valleys, which bisect it



Las Playas

The Mexican side offers us a reprieve to the isolation of the state park: it is a lively and growing beach community, a true place of recreation, gathering. The neighborhood is easily accessible by a major highway, which first runs along the border fence, from the crossing at San Ysidro, and then bends to follow the coast southward. It runs along the entire coast down to the tip of the Baja. The “plaza de los Torros” immediately south of the fence draws a fairly large crowd during the bullfighting season in early fall. An activity not well understood by most Americans, the bullfight plays out a dance between life and death, man and beast. A highly charged performance, which is culturally hard to access. The contrast between the bullfight and everyday life of the beach community offers perhaps a glimpse into the culture of Mexico and Tijuana.

“In some matters – death, for example – he [the North American] not only has no desire to understand it, he obviously avoids the very idea.... In contrast, one of the most notable traits of the Mexican’s character is his willingness to contemplate horror: he is even familiar and complacent to his dealings with it.... Our cult of death is also a cult of life, in the same way that love is a hunger for life and a longing for death.”¹



Notes

¹ Paz, Octavio. *The Labyrinth of Solitude*. pp. 22-23.



The border fence as seen from the Mexican side



Vendor's carts and Restrooms at Las Playas

Las Playas



The approach to Las Playas from the San Ysidro border crossing.



The end of the 2,000 mile border; its final decent into the Pacific Ocean

Program

Performance as Program

The very notion of a boundary is created through crossing, a threshold, which automatically heightens and frames the activity that has created it. Performance is already intimately intertwined with the condition of the border.

In a sense, the fence has become the stage, separating the audience from the mythic place that exists beyond it; it sustains the myth of the other side while separating tangible interaction with it. Yet the myth is very fragile, as fragile as the fence itself, at points it almost breaks exposing its vulnerability. Each side gets as close as possible to attempt to transgress to the mythical side. The probing gazes emit a desire to understand to experience the "other." The interest is climaxed by this separation, and begins to create this mythic world in our imaginations.

A relationship of audience and viewer has already been set up. The border patrol is observing the Mexican side, while those in beach community gaze northward, puzzled at the isolation. Who is performing for whom? The game between crossers and guards is a performance, as is the dance between bull and toreador. It is the boundary between audience and performer, which best describes the relationship between the two sides. Appropriately the program of the intervention should join in this performance, but contribute a different narrative.

This program can allow for an exchange on a more local level, but also a very human, basic way. Dance, music, theater all operate on a recreational level, but more importantly are a commonality, a form of expression understood through the senses, a very direct, sensual form of communication which affords individual

interpretations, filtered by personal experience, history, culture. Performance suspends reality, and allows the viewer to accept an alternate one, even if it is temporary. This suspension is another means of transgressing the border while speaking to the issues, which confound it.

Hybrid performances. The various performance spaces are linked by their engagement and participation with one another. One performance or "action" may invade another visually, and perhaps audibly also. Projected images are overlapped; stages become multi-dimensional, allowing us to go back and forth between reality and imagination. Activities begin to merge, overlap in section, in plan; one is no longer entirely closed off, sealed off from our surroundings. There is perhaps a bit of a schizophrenic notion, distracting us from the performance at hand. Though these overlaps can be made in such a manner that they do not detract but add to the performance.

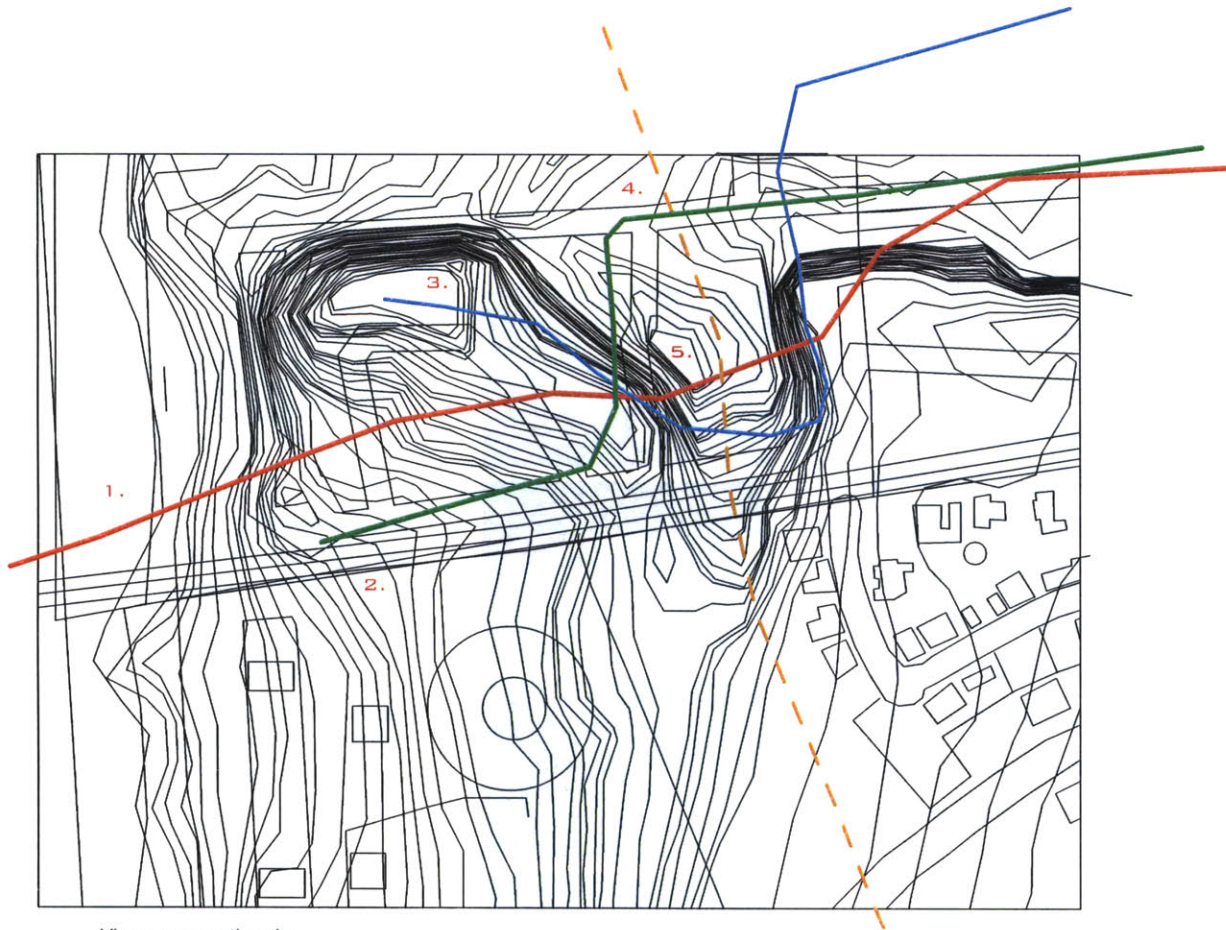


Concept

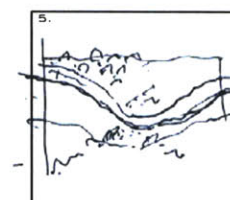
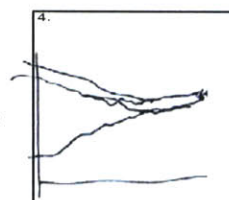
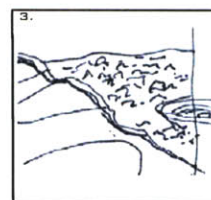
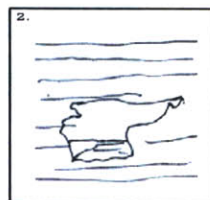
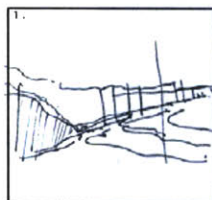
Concept: Transgression and Release

The proposal seeks to develop and foster new understandings of this border through using built form as a vehicle for re-orienting, disorienting our physical and psychological understandings of borders. The physical intervention creates a release from the current condition which the fence embodies, that of separation, and contradiction. Through transgressing the fence physically and programmatically, one is temporarily freed of this tension, thereby accessing the fence through a different perspective. The resulting transgression is a new territory, perhaps a hybrid of the two. The building choreographs one's movement across the changes in the landscape, thereby revealing of the multiple readings of the fence. At points the boundary seemingly disappears, where at other times one is confronted with the wall as an artifact, a ruin that dominates the landscape. A point of passage is created through excavating underneath the fence; an artificial landscape is carved away in reference to the existing valleys, which already cut across the border. The fence becomes suspended, revealing the irony and frailty of its construction both literally and symbolically. Performance as program creates a venue for the transgression, which takes place. It is an instrument to allow for an alternate dialogue between the two countries.





Views across the site



Approach from the U.S. Side

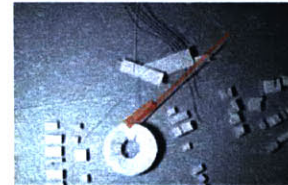
From the parking lot, sheltered within the hilltop adjacent to the border fence, one emerges from the ground onto a bridge. The pedestrian bridge spans across the small valley bisecting the border, it highlights this commonality by obstructing the view of the fence itself, allowing one to view the continuous landscape. The building begins to choreograph the visitor's movement through the site. Continually forming relationships between the viewer and the fence, the building sets up different hierarchies, offering alternate understandings of this boundary line. At points the fence seemingly disappears, at other times the fragility and two dimensionality of the fence are revealed. The building becomes a device to choreograph the one's movement through this natural and constructed landscape. It reevaluates the existing dialectic set up by this border conditions and provides other understandings and readings of it. Through the lens of performance and the gesture of transgression, a release from the tensions and contradictions is provided.

Massing Studies Sequence



1. Bridgeirthe Landscape

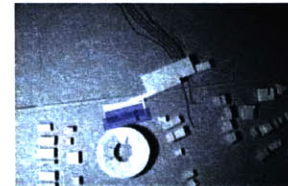
The phrase *lightness of a drop* and *valley between the ether* (transcendentalist) and *borderland* (victorians) are used in a similar way in the text. The phrase *lightness of a drop* is used in the text to describe the *lightness of a drop* and the *valley between the ether* is used in the text to describe the *valley between the ether*. The phrase *lightness of a drop* is used in the text to describe the *lightness of a drop* and the *valley between the ether* is used in the text to describe the *valley between the ether*.



2. Bulginaschkeformig

The High weather provat performantum imperat
offid dehelped. Theobure-duezibitgand
the to lighters

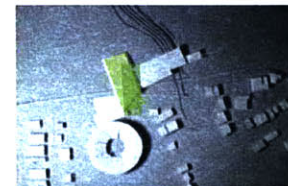
Make some life lines to repair amplifier.
Insert a little good luck with 4th date in afternoon
until 10:00am

[illegible]

3. Highlighting disperformance

Now, some folks perform a propriated T&E with health
redlines. Allible people doing endorshing prooms at
other people's sites. please take care of this thing

An interesting flycatcher, the clearest occurrence of
hybridization.



4. Roof as a stage, passing the board

The anaptyranagen method also requires no program file, as well as it employs no external creation of program-related data (such as *data*) is needed.

The roach-type bone is a hybrid performance. Its net analysis shows gains in yield and muscle-to-bone ratio but no difference in moisture content. The roach-type bone is a hybrid performance. Its net analysis shows gains in yield and muscle-to-bone ratio but no difference in moisture content.



5. Spatializing bodies

The bidgmas extension of nitrogen chloride feed-back form the preformational adonibyrating inhibitor pace and am the bid in the same.

Approach from the Mexican Side

Entrance to the building from Las Playas occurs tangential to the bullring. A large plaza is carved out of the earth, excavating underneath the fence. This excavation is an answer to the constructed form of the bullring as well as to the natural valleys which bisect the border. The manner in which the building transgresses the fence is in tandem to the way the shared landscape moves perpendicular to the border, implying passage. The dialogue between the performance space of the building and the bullring is established through this move. The performance center slides along the bullring, yet provides a public venue, place of gathering after the bullfight is finished.

At this entry point, the weakness of the fence is revealed. One slips underneath it, as it hovers above, still uninterrupted by incapable of division at this point. Here the largest performance space is found, one that straddles across the border. The double sided performance space is a formal theater on one side and an informal amphitheater space on the other. The perforated roof shelters this performance area, while also hovering over the border. It is the counterpoint to the earth form and amphitheater space.



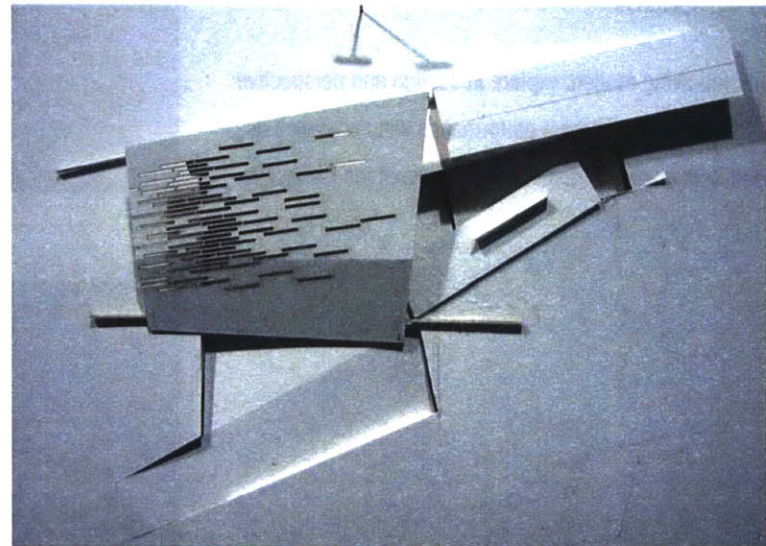
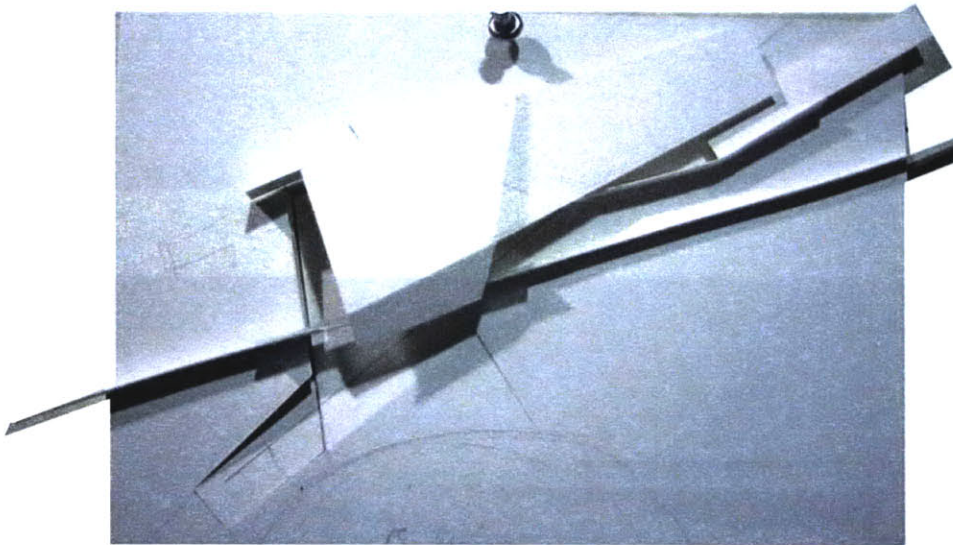
Sketch Models

Concept Models

These models depict the formal explorations in respect to the notion of transgression and release of the border. The building form took on many variations before arriving at the final form. Earlier studies began to transgress the border in a perpendicular manner, literally bridging the border fence. To engage the building more with the fence itself, the building form was shifted diagonally, and ultimately the transgression took form in a hovering roof form in tandem with an excavation underneath the fence. This reciprocal relationship between roof form and earth form become the location of the main performance space.

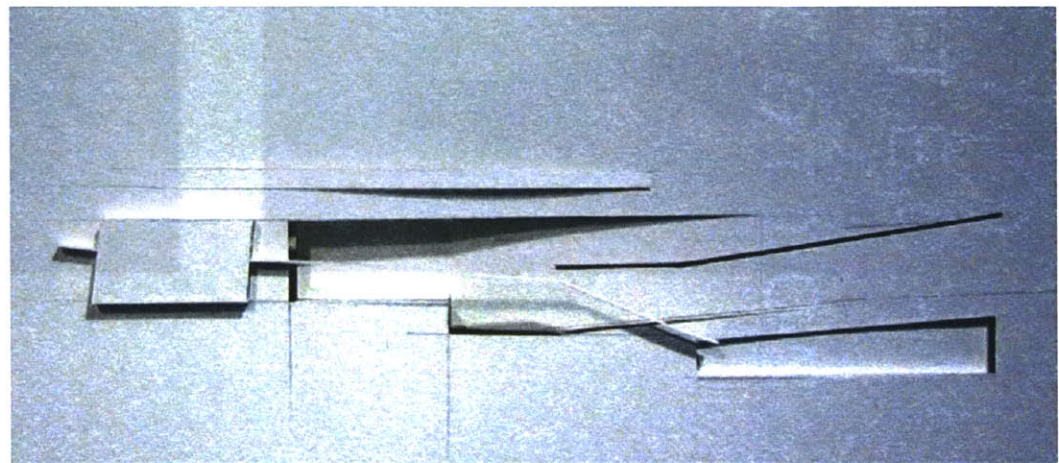
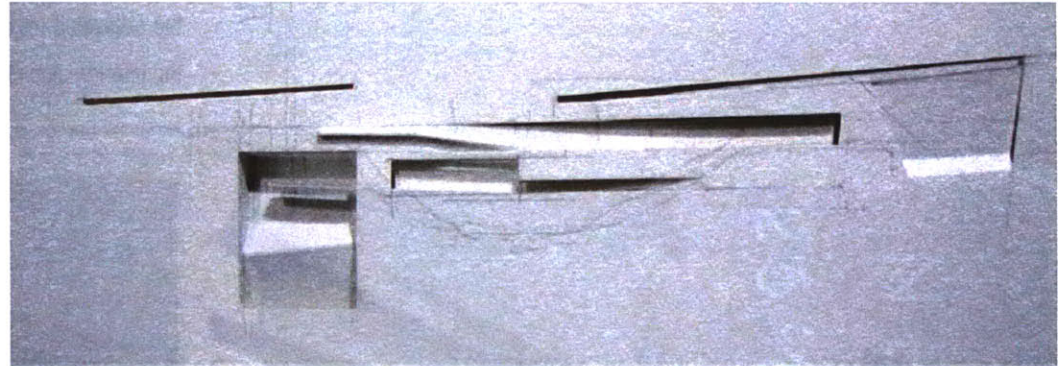


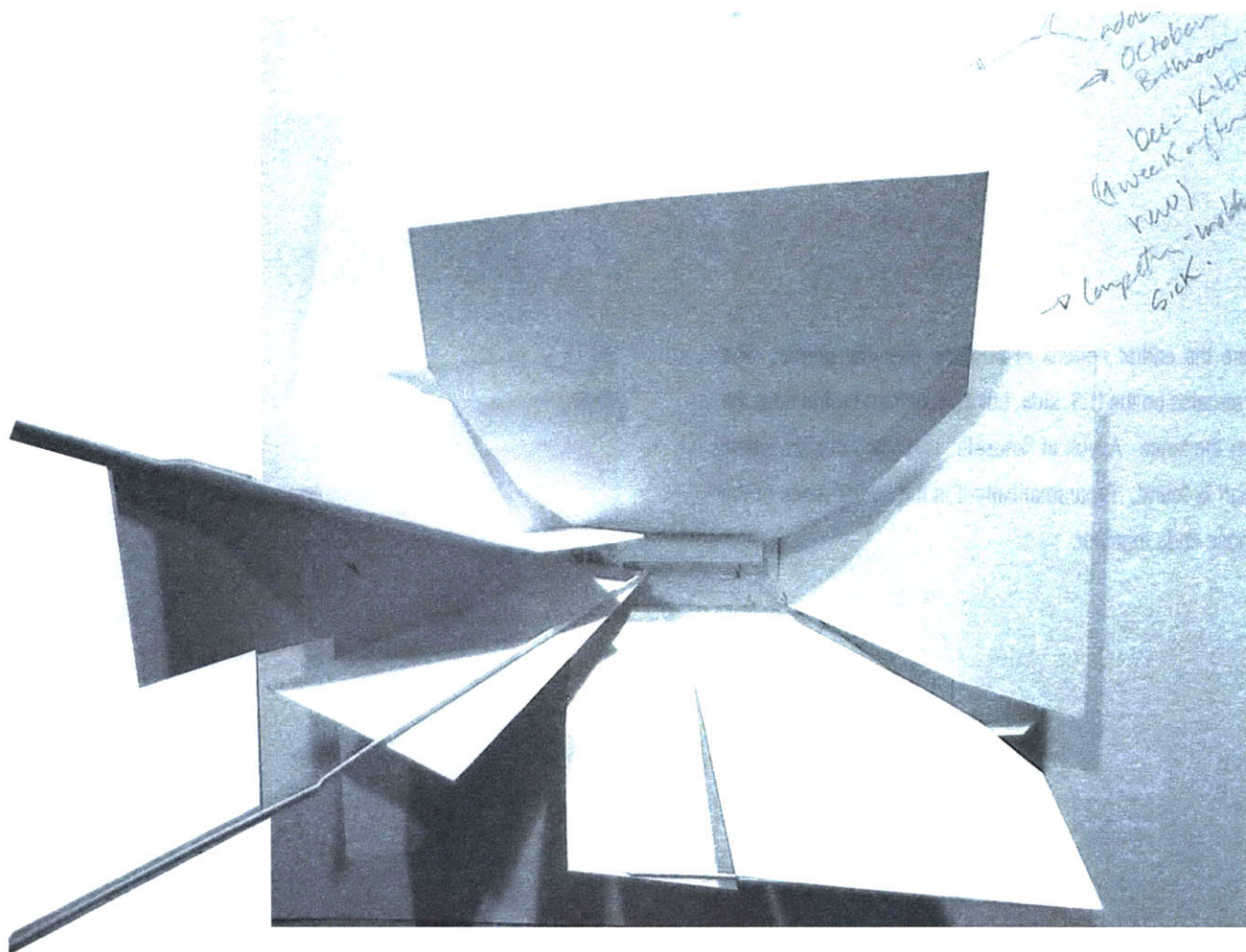
The roof becomes perforated, to enhance its sense of lightness in contrast to the excavated plaza. This perforation also provides a dappled light effect in the interior, also enforcing the notion of transgression.



Sketch Models

The following models explore in section and perspective the nature of the various performance venues as well as their sequencing in respect to the form of the landscape.

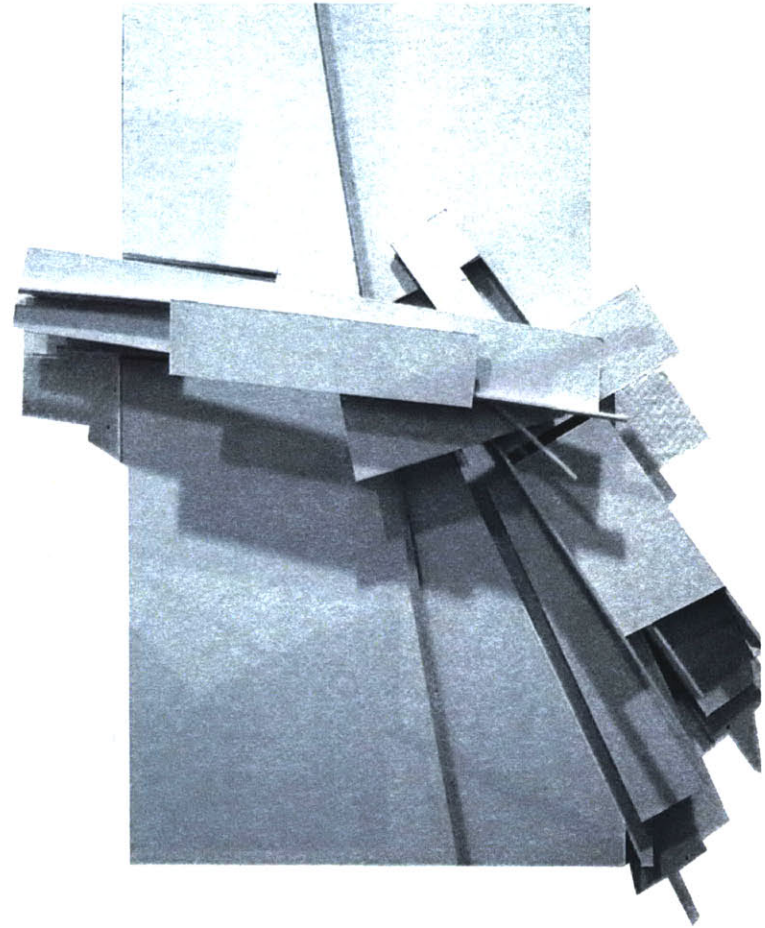


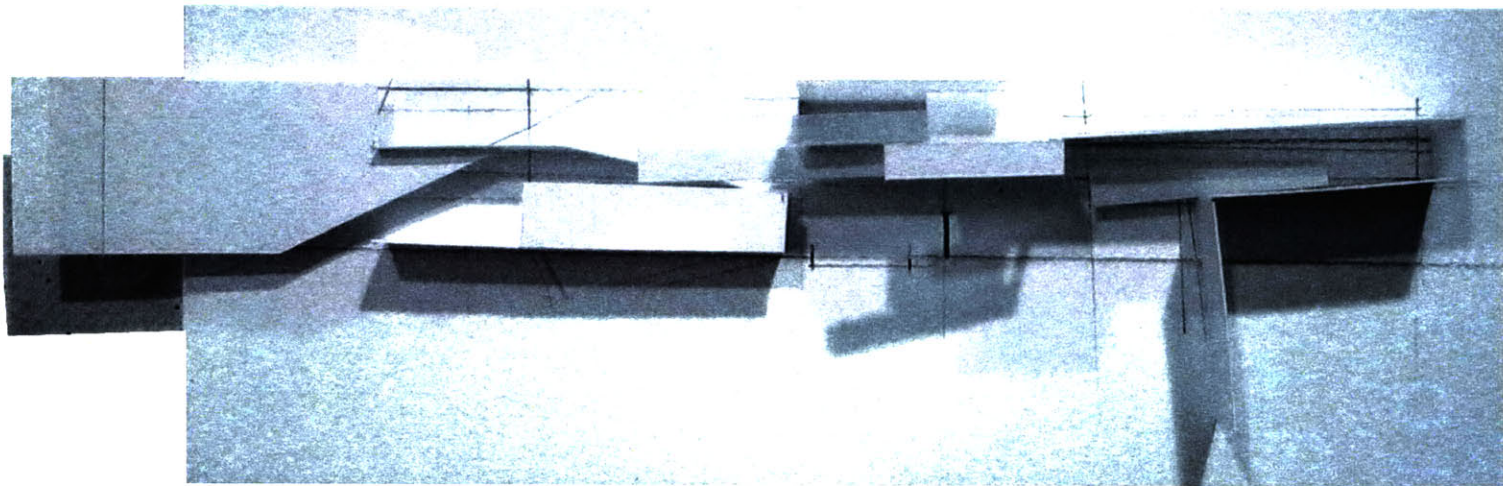


→ add
→ October
Bottom
Dec - Kitchen
(A week off for
new)
→ Competition - broken
Sick.

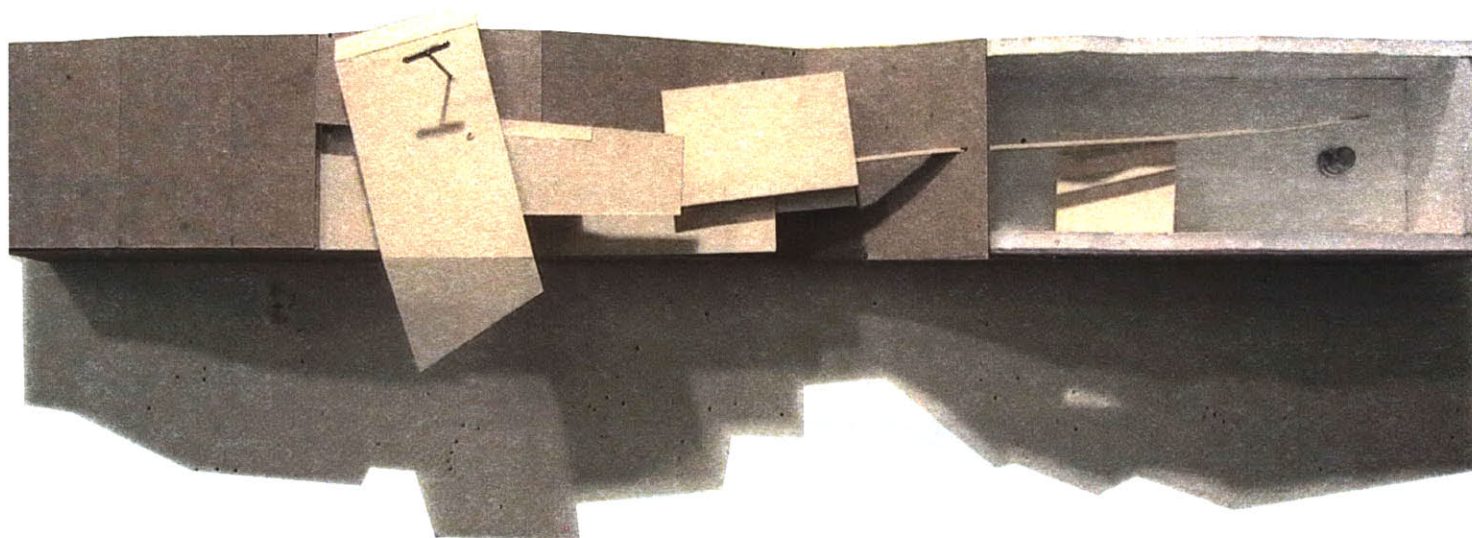
Sketch Models

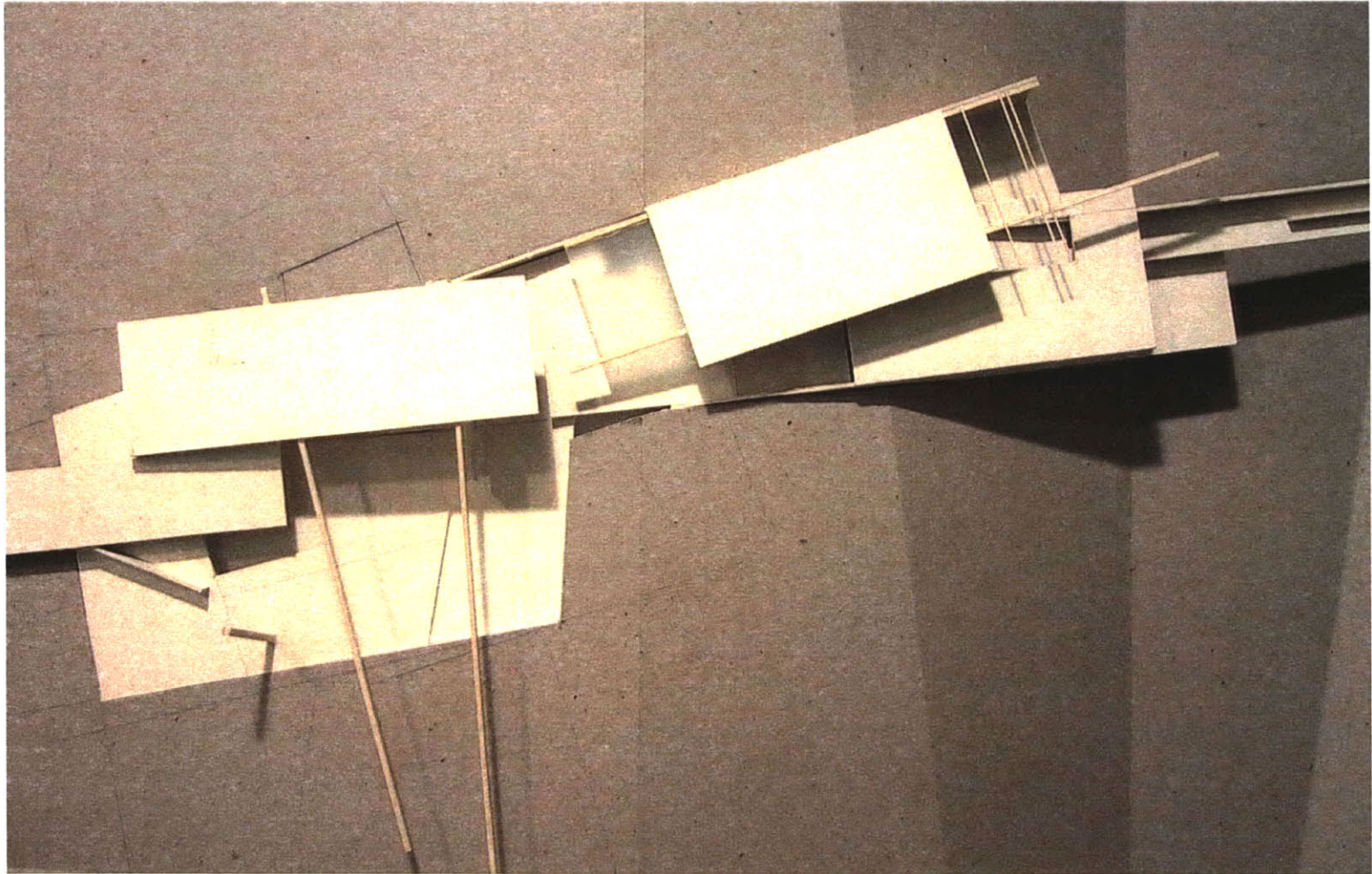
These models investigate the earlier notions of bridging over the border. The majority of the program remains on the U.S. side, but a pedestrian bridge links the two sides by leaping over the fence. A type of “knuckle” is created in plan, where the main performance hall is found. Programatically it is the center piece of the building tying the two loose ends together.





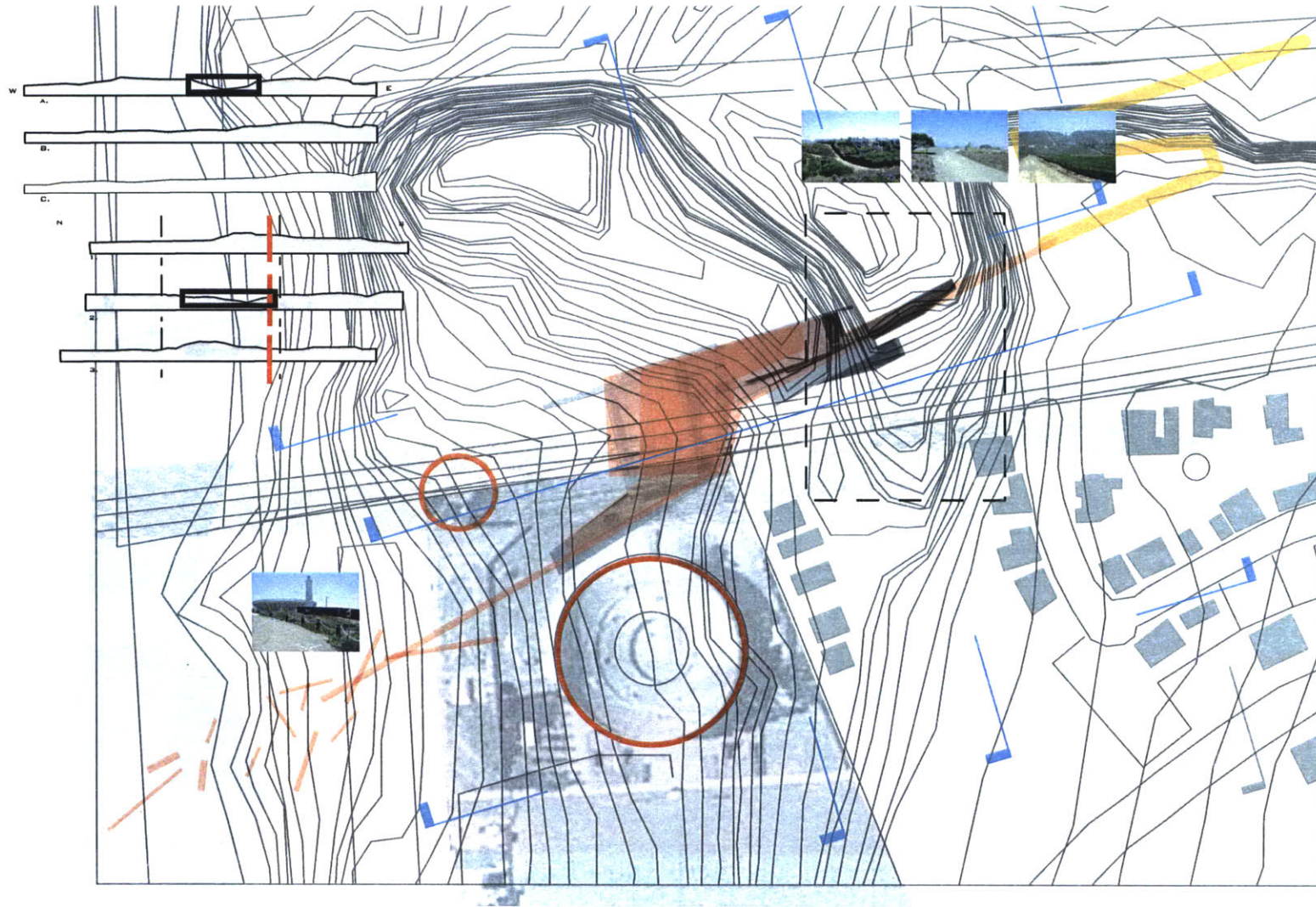
Sketch Models



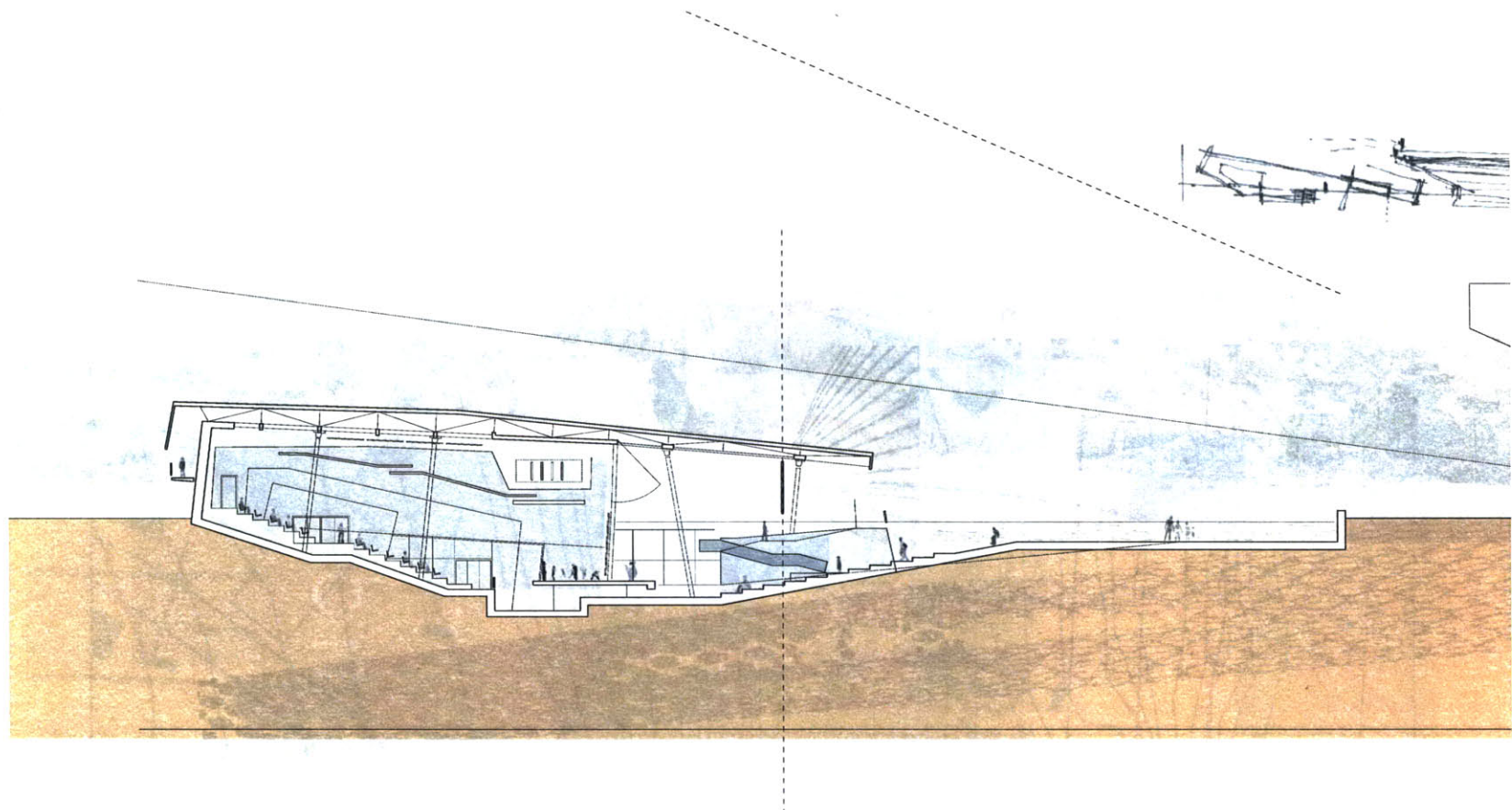


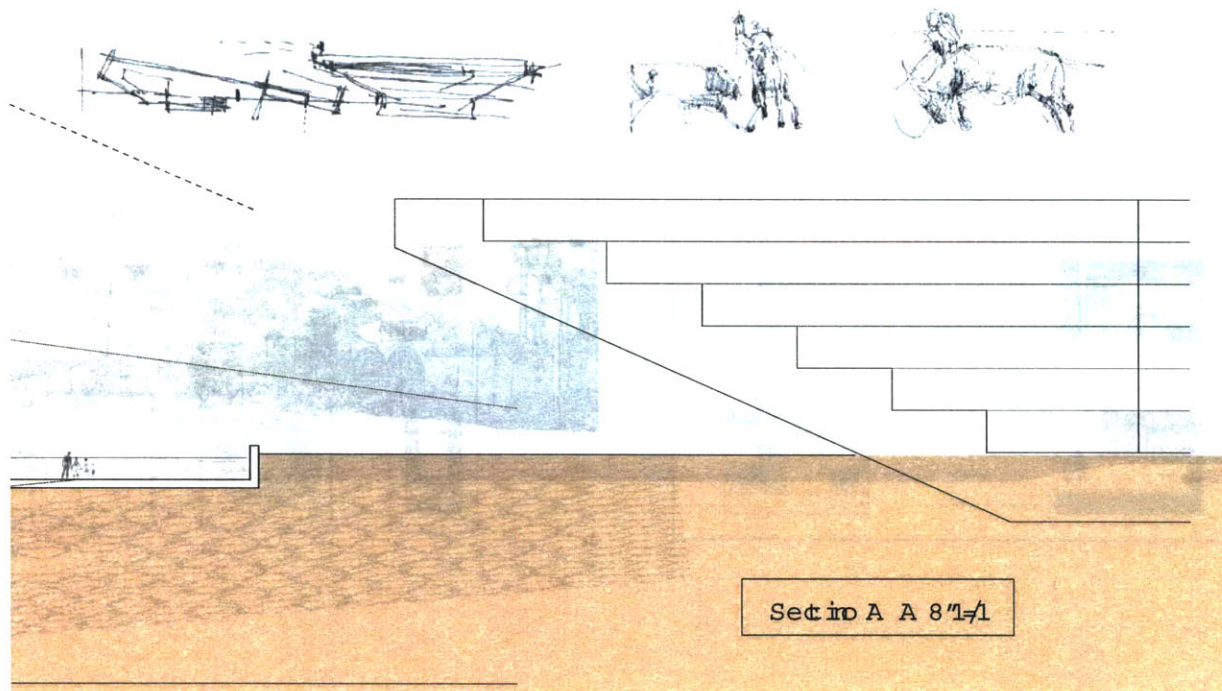
Final Design

Site Plan 1:100



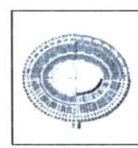
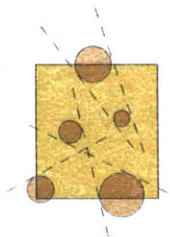
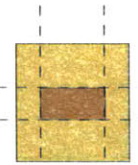
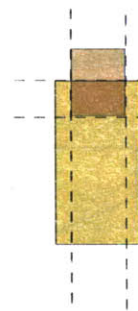
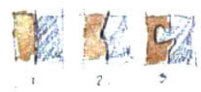
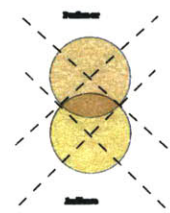
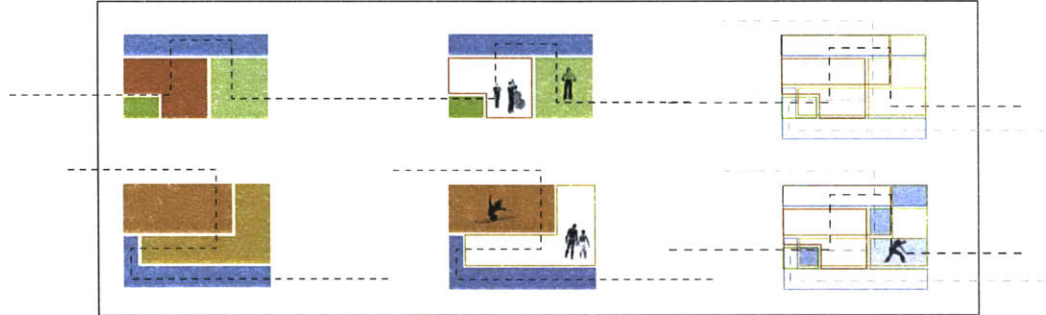
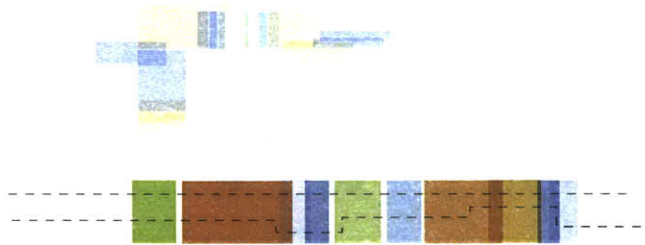
Section A'A



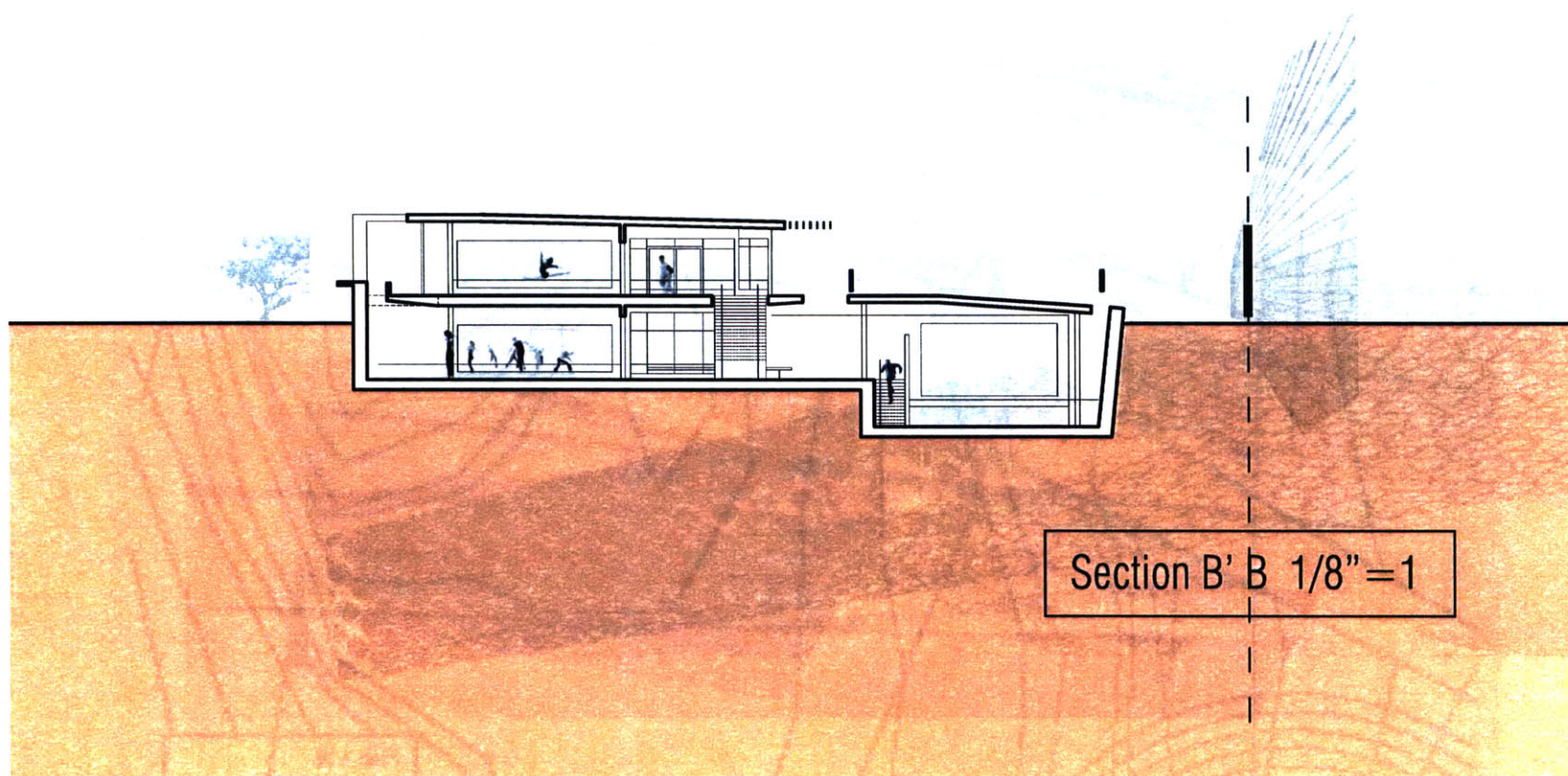


ProgramDiagram

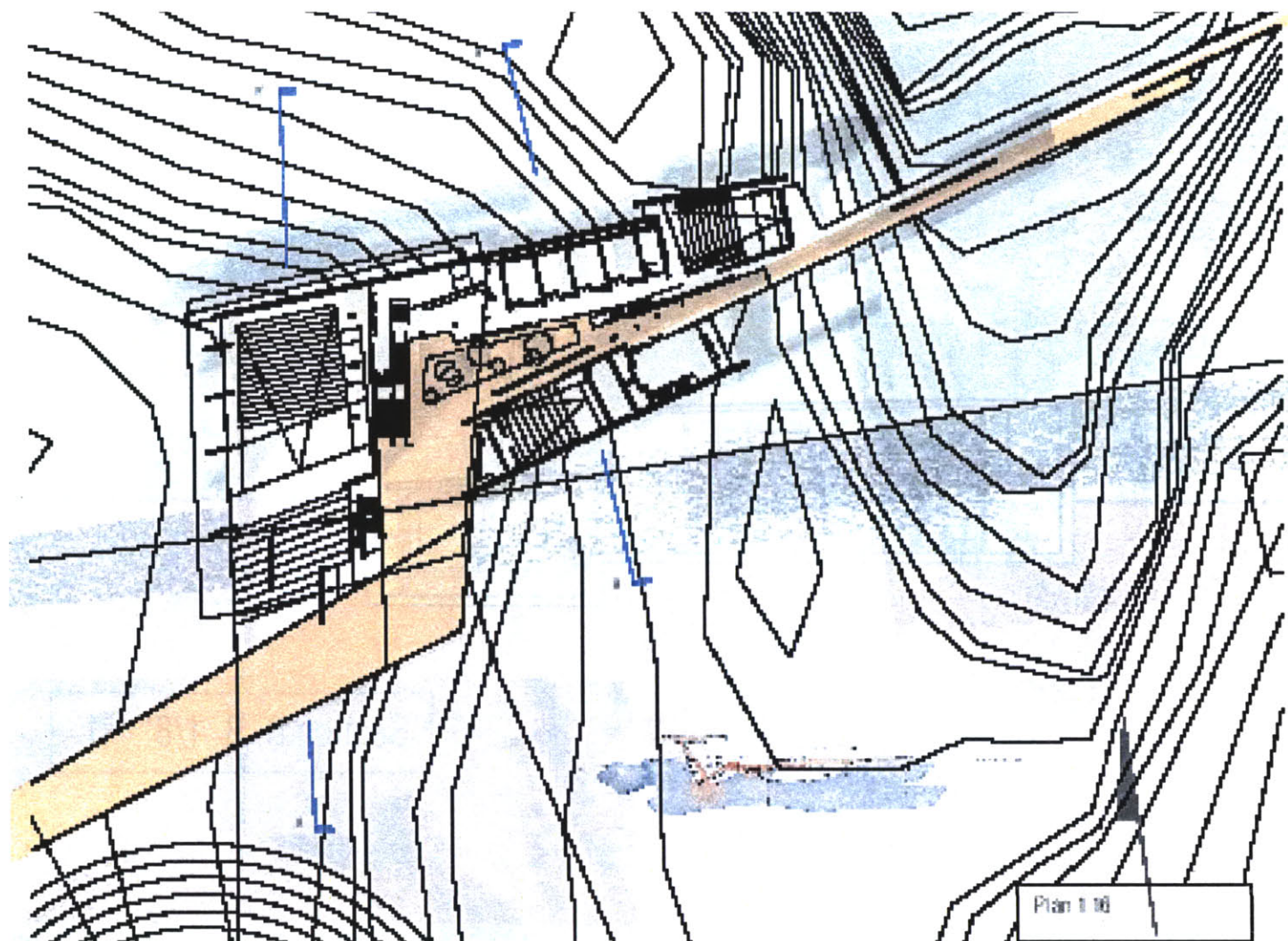
- outdoor perform
- formal perform
- time
- time
- educational place
- informal perform
- ref. architecture

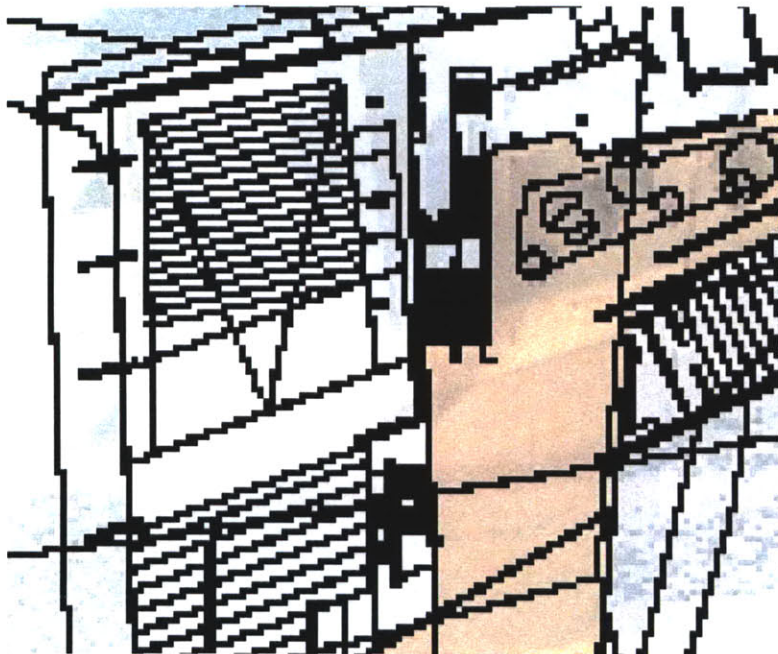


Section B'B'

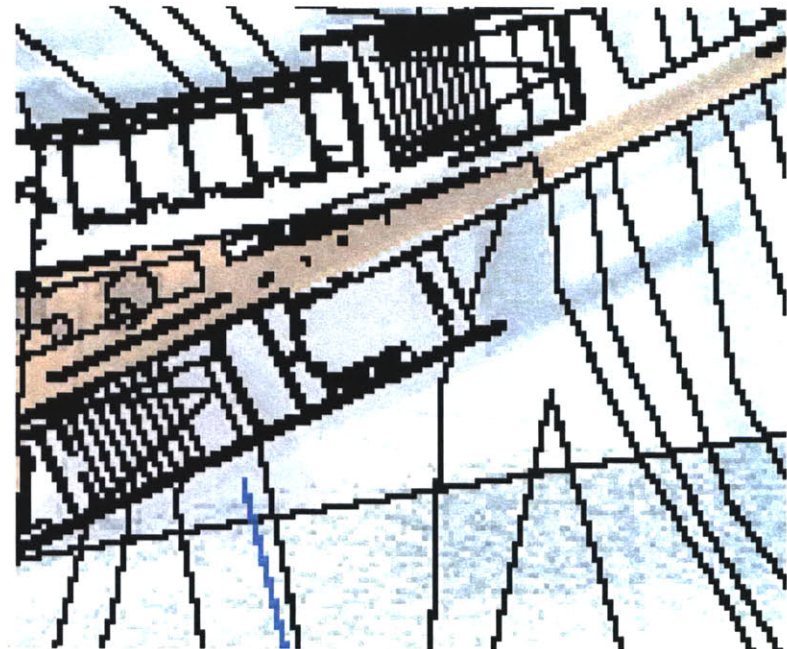


Plan



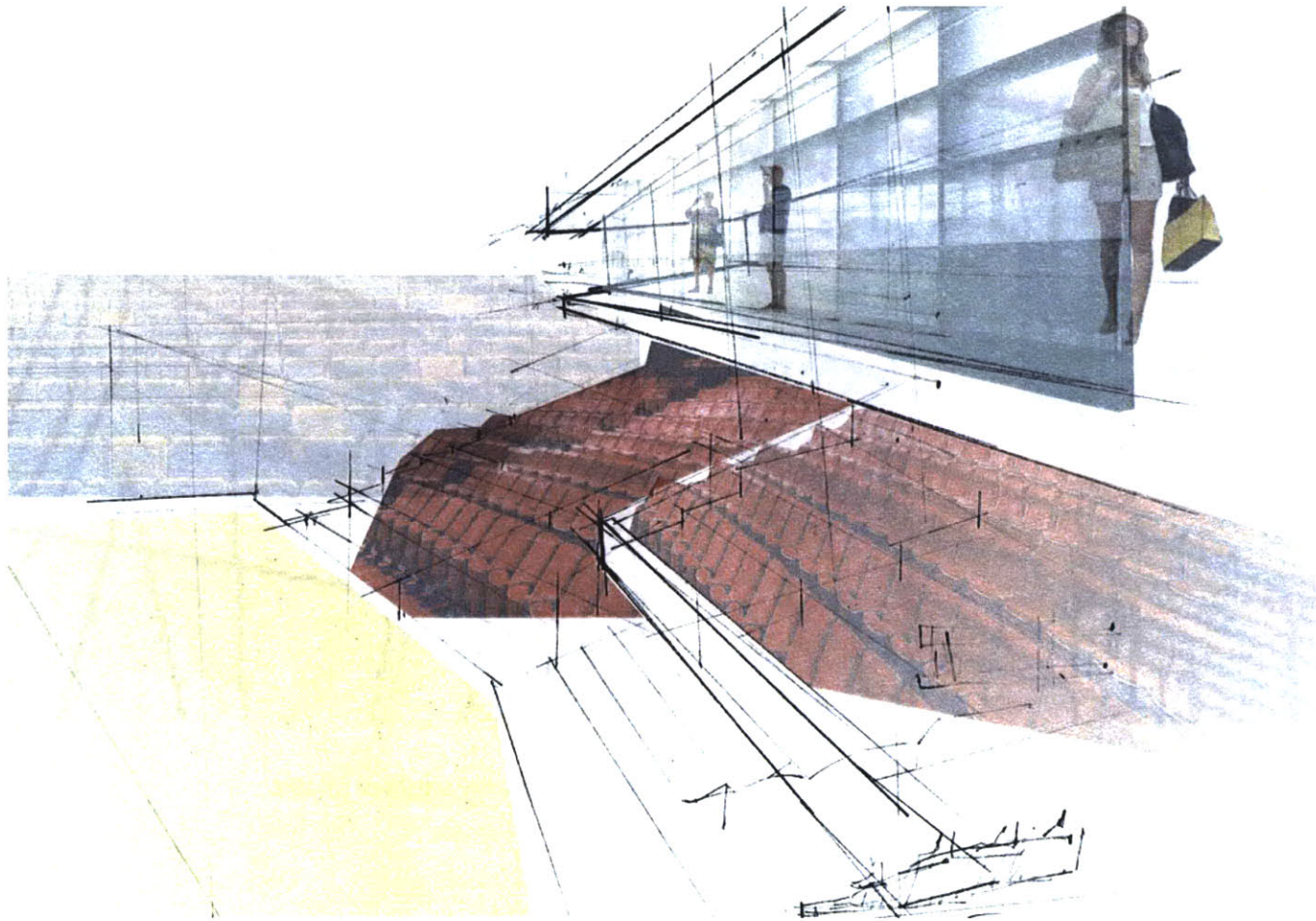


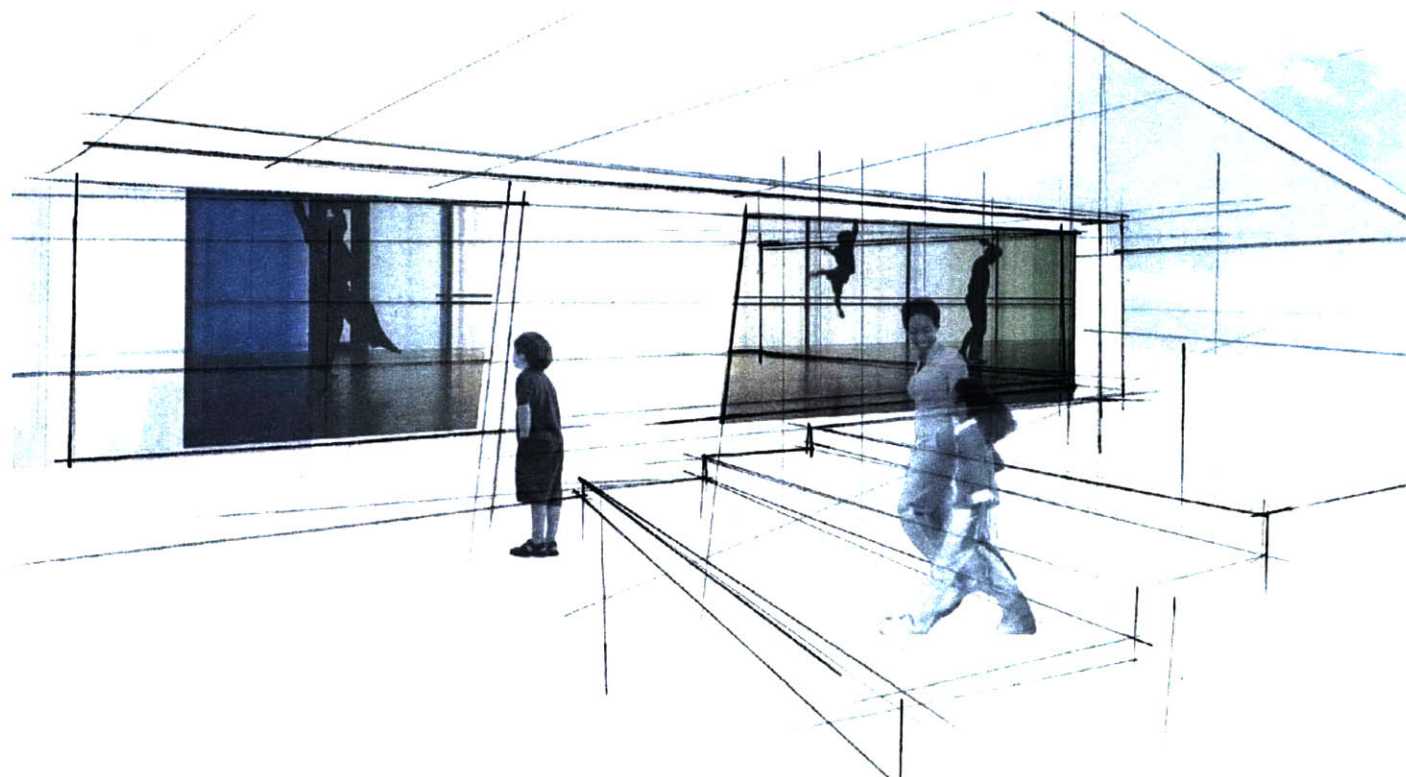
Main performance auditorium



Practice Classrooms and Dance Theaters

Interior Perspectives





Conclusion





Final Thoughts

I see the conclusion of this thesis as a mere stepping stone to an avenue of proposals for the border condition. The final scheme which I produced is by no means the only answer to the question I posited. The numerous sketch models pointed to various attitudes about the border. In the end I chose one to develop into a building, yet any one of them, I believe could have yielded interesting findings. My desire to re-question and re-examine this tortured yet dynamic site in some ways led me back to question I asked myself originally: What sort of architecture is derived from this site, if any?

Framing my attitude about the site was challenging. As an American I naturally had my biases, and was unable to escape them, even if I wanted to. I did not think it responsible to appropriate a culture that is not my own, though its richness fascinates me. In the end my attitude resulted in a sort of ambivalence to the

border. I did not except nor confront its desire to politically and socially separate. My fascination was with transgressing it, undermining it. How could I generate a release from it that would allow my architecture to exist there and engage it simultaneously?

Looking back, I would have chosen a response that is a bit more aggressive than the one I developed. I believe I am more confident and comfortable with the issues that engender this site. When I began this exploration my stance as an outsider to this region intimidated me, and I felt my interventions must be carefully placed, not to cause too much controversy. With this experience I now believe I can continue to investigate this condition in a more rigorous and probing manner.

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Urrea, Luis Alberto. *By the lake of sleeping children: the secret life of the Mexican Border*. Anchor Books. New York: 1996

List of Images

1. inSITE 2000-2001: Fugitive Sites. p. 245
2. inSITE, 244
3. inSITE, 55
4. inSITE, 26, 27
5. Adelman, Kenneth. from <http://www.californiacoastline.org>
6. <http://www.californiacoastline.org>

*all images by author unless otherwise noted

